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SERMON I.

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In memoriam of James W. Alexander, D.D.

"THEY that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—DAN. 12: 3.

GREAT work rewarded by great wages! When the multitude of them "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," said the celestial messenger to Daniel, the man greatly beloved, "then they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

Do these words need an interpreter? Nay, their meaning is transparent. They require meditation, not exposition. If an explanatory remark be at all needed, it is in regard to the terms in which those who are to be rewarded by the exceeding and eternal

weight of glory are here described: "*they that be wise*" and "*they that turn many to righteousness.*" These are not two classes, but one. "They that be wise," should be rendered, *they who instruct*—they who teach others in the true wisdom; which, as you see, is but another description of those who turn men to righteousness.

This text, then, may be justly called the prophet's and preacher's text. It was addressed to a troubled minister of God in need of being lifted up by such a hope. Daniel, troubled even to dismay at the burdens of prophecy committed to him, troubled with his surrounding dangers, with the grievous captivity of himself and his people, and with the weight of his responsibility as their leader, instructor, and guardian against the snares of idolatry—Daniel—what was he but a type of successive ministers in the Church of God, who in different forms encountered substantially the same labors and sorrows, and therefore needed the same cheering assurance that God would not be unrighteous to forget their work of faith and labor of love. Here is such an assurance. We do not wish to exclude any, even the most feeble and obscure believer and worker, from a share in this and kindred promises of God. But may we not be permitted, for once, to restrict it to the special work and wages of him who, not incidentally, but as the grand purpose of his life, devotes himself to the work of *instructing and turning men to righteousness*? May I not, for your sake as well as my own, magnify on this occasion that office which was so well filled by my noble friend and brother, *in memoriam* of whom I speak to-night, and from the burdens and cares of which he has gone to enjoy the rewards here specially promised. In doing this, I shall only be enforcing the duty of the Church to a departed ministry, enjoined by the great apostle in these touching words: "*Remember your guides who have spoken unto you the word of God, and attentively considering their departure, follow their faith: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.*"

I forewarn you, my hearers, not to expect from me an attempt to describe the recompense of the reward here painted by such bright images. Who can approach, even in conception, to that glory in which Paul and they who followed him as he followed Christ, now dwell? My object shall rather be to remind you of some of the characteristic qualities which are implied in the work of which this glory is the reward—that of instructing and turning men to righteousness. These qualities were found in a very eminent degree in him whose departure we lament. A life like his is an instructive chapter in the Book of God worthy of thorough study. His praise is not only in his own, but in all the churches. I shall not resort to labored eulogy. I shall use no "flattering words." He is beyond the reach or the need of our praises. I aim to speak the simplest words of candid and reverent love; and I am willing to leave those who knew him least to decide whether

the exaggerations of affection are at all necessary in commemorating such a man.

I shall not speak of him as one of the playmates of my childhood, for we were too soon separated by the removal of his residence, to maintain even a boyish intimacy. But after a reünion, which took place in Princeton, after association with him under his father's roof, after frequent correspondence and the close intercourse of co-presbyters and co-laborers here in the same field, especially after the frank intercourse of intimate friendship, I feel that I can speak with the especial emphasis of a long fellowship which reached through many years and mutual trials, and which afforded large opportunities of knowing him well.

From this vantage-ground I deliberately express the conviction of my judgment when I say that, so far as I can see, this loss is irreparable. Of course, I speak from the human point of view. Every honest minister of the word, our beloved and respected friend included, has formed his own ideal of what is desirable and possible in his office; and the broader his conceptions, the more painfully humbling will be the consciousness of his own failure to reach that ideal. The more, therefore, will he be inclined to throw himself down in the shadow of the cross, where his deficiencies may be hidden through the grace of our dear Lord. Our judgments of Christian and ministerial character must needs have two sides, Godward and manward. The first formed by comparison with a divine ideal, the latter by a comparison with the actual. It is with the latter, not the former, in my eye that I repeat that this loss is irreparable; that, so far as I know, such another combination of gifts and graces is not to be looked for soon. In single qualities he doubtless had superiors; but the harmonious whole has rarely, if ever, been surpassed. And this, in all of three respects when taken together, his *personal traits*, his *scholarly acquirements*, and his *official character*. Let me speak briefly of each of these, and even a stranger, should such an one be here, will comprehend why we feel that our loss and that of the Church is irreparable.

The personal characteristics of our friend may be included in the comprehensive title "A Christian gentleman:" the highest style and type of manhood. A good authority—Lord Lyttleton—commenting upon Paul's defence before Agrippa—adverts to the courteous humanity it displays, and calls the Apostle, among other things, a gentleman. Nature, education, and grace gave to him to whose memory we are offering our poor tribute, the vastly important quality (would it were more common) which we know under the name of good breeding; the essence of which lies in the absence of the selfish, and the power of the unselfish affections. Respectful deference to persons in high or low conditions, the modest

humility which does not obtrude its own claims; the self-respect which does not run after reputation, but leaves reputation to follow in its track; tender consideration for weakness; the disposition to see every character in the fairest light; these and kindred traits belong to the perfection of the Christian character. Were we to affirm that they are of its very essence, we should fear that multitudes calling themselves Christian, would scarcely stand the test. Fidelity to truth and righteousness in our dear brother was utterly removed from all coarseness in manner, all wordy invective. Firmness in asserting his own convictions, did not degenerate into a petty and fractious personality. Firm he was in all essentials; but gentle, unobtrusive, and even diffident in all matters merely incidental. He knew how to meet and rebuke intentional disrespect toward his person or office, but he was always accessible to the humble, and weak, and suffering. He dealt tenderly with the erring, and was "patient towards all." Upon some, who did not know him, I have heard it said, that he produced the impression of distance and coldness. It is almost the only defect I have ever heard urged against the perfection of his personal bearing, but it is a defect which loses its character of a fault, when we know that it arose from those physical causes which lie in a great measure beyond the range of the will, being almost as involuntary as the beating of the heart. Those who would magnify such an occasional infirmity, which often occurs in highly nervous and sensitive organizations, betray their ignorance of the mysteries of the human frame, or their want of candor. In this case, the imputation is the more unjust, as the defect originated from the severe shocks of bodily disease which often threatened his very life.

The meannesses of personal rivalry, the petty ebullitions of self-conceit, ever watching for opportunities of magnifying its own mountainous *me*, the dexterous stratagems meant to catch public notice, were the abhorrence of this Christian man, as a gentleman, a scholar, and a minister of truth. His was a noble candor. His charity was indeed not blind. When Truth was concerned, his trumpet gave no uncertain sound. Not his the

'Candor which loves in see-saw strains to tell
Of acting wickedly, but meaning well:
And finds with keen, discriminating sight
Black's not so black, nor white so very white.'

In every thing that bore upon truth or purity, he was a decided man—a man of articulate speech—no small praise in times of compromise and vacillation tending to the defacement of the old dividing lines between truth and error. But though so firm in dealing with principles, who more courteous in dealing with persons? Who more decorous in the modes of utterance, when called to deliver his cherished views upon points of difference? Who so reticent of the wit and humor of which he possessed a very

large measure, and by which, had he condescended to employ them, he might have overwhelmed an antagonist with sarcasms? This was not his method of engaging in the necessary conflicts of opinion, which, some more and some less important, must be shared in by any one who mingles with men. He was a noble, candid, gentle opponent, whose conciliatory spirit was limited only by reverence for the supremacy of truth and righteousness.

I will not attempt to draw the veil which hides from view the privacy of the family, and speak of the son, the husband, and the father who is now gone from us, except to say, that within those sacred precincts, where lost joys are at this moment awakening, now grief, now sweet remembrance, shone the same genial but clear-sighted love which made its mark upon all who knew him. Whether ministering or being ministered to in the personal and domestic sorrows of which he had no small share, he was ever breathing in an atmosphere of gentle, patient love. This is not the place for details, even if I were the most fitting person to give them. We leave their recital to one who from the closest intimacy is best qualified to present this side of the personal character of our departed brother.

Let me now say a few words—and they shall be but few—upon his scholarly acquirements. Not that much might not be said, but that the limits of modern discourse oblige me to be brief, and I am myself impatient to proceed to the last and most material point—his official character.

Of his mental power and literary culture it may be safely said, that high as the general estimate of them is, it falls short, very far short of the facts. I do but speak the judgment of those, who, from their own competency to decide what scholarship is, are fit witnesses, that had he devoted his whole powers to any department of science or letters, he would have secured an eminent rank. He might have shone in any professorial chair, in any line of authorship, had he not preferred, as the work of his conscience and heart, to give himself wholly to the ministry of reconciliation. A powerful passion—the *love of souls*—(I mean what I say, and use the words in no canting sense)—conquered the ambition of the scholar, and restricted his labor of acquirement to those subjects which might be possibly subsidized in the cause of religion, and especially of religious instruction. A clear intellectual perception, rapid insight coupled with careful analysis and broad powers of generalizing, fine appreciation of the limits of human reason and within those limits, a severe logic, would have made him, had he bent his powers in that direction, a metaphysician of the highest order. With these—and this can seldom be said—he had a vivid sensibility to nature, a keen discrimination of character, a large acquaintance with ancient and modern belles lettres, a delicate eye and ear and internal taste, (which are the necessities of the artist,) the

finest sense of the humorous, the readiest memory—and these would have carried him, if he had chosen to follow their bent, far into the regions of poetical creation.

No one skilled in such matters could quietly converse long with him, without a strong impression of the soundness and scope of his mental and moral faculties, the great opulence of his learning, and especially his wonderful command of it. For in a very high degree, he possessed that faculty, without which no one ever attained great eminence of any kind—*memory*. This made him a ready man. His learning was not lumber in a store-room, but furniture in a well-ordered dwelling, easily got at when wanted. He knew where and how to get knowledge, and when gotten how to employ it for his own uses. The fruits of his observation and reading were at hand. Memory made him a linguist, and had he felt inclined, and health permitted, he could easily have added indefinitely to his stores of dead and living languages, in respect to which, as it was, he had few if any living superiors.

Do I speak extravagantly? Is it affection, prone as we all know to magnify the qualities of the dead, that here utters exaggerations? No: reverence for the memory of my friend, to say nothing of respect for the truth, would forbid any exaggeration. I do not claim for him what passes under the name of genius, but I claim something far nobler. The multiform but harmonious qualities which made him a well-balanced man—a noble globe, all whose sides are turned successively to the sun. Genius is often but a morbid, mental secretion, and flourishes at the expense of the other faculties. Like a young eagle fallen from its nest before its wing and eye are ready for flight, genius, as it is called, often goes floundering through the tangled forest of thought, helpless and useless, to the wonder and often the pitying contempt of the beholder. Many-sided and robust, a well-proportioned culture can alone do deeds of honor and usefulness which command respect. Such was our departed brother's self-culture. Had he chosen to demean his powers, he could have easily secured the sparkling but superficial honors which now reward that creature of modern times—the lecturer—a character much degenerated from its original type—a character, which, with a few exceptions, might quit the stage without any serious disadvantage to society. He might have written learned works and brilliant fictions and keen satire and poetic sentiment—and if you ask me why he did not? I answer—and I have already adverted to the fact—it was because he had otherwise consecrated his powers, his time, and his enfeebled health. All his contributions to the written wealth of the world—and they are not a few—bear the stamp of mental power and learning; but they are all in the direction of his Master's service. Whatever his pen sent forth, whether he wrote for the young, the illiterate, or scholarly, was the tribute of a soul which was informed by the

Spirit of God, and bent on instructing and turning men to righteousness. This is true of many others besides him. Why do they not display their gifts upon the rostrum, or at the hustings, in the senate, or in the varied themes of literature? Like Nehemiah, they have selected their work, and have no heart nor time to go down from it. They are sealed and consecrated men, who, amidst the din of worldly ambitions tempting them to descend into the more conspicuous fields of life and display their skill—hear and obey the voice which once said: "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

This brings us to consider more particularly this side of the character of our venerated and beloved brother—that of the minister of Christ, embracing his qualities as a preacher and pastor. He was both: preacher and pastor—offices usually but not always united, and rarely united as they were in him.

And where shall I begin? At what point, in what truth or class of truths, shall we find the central spring of his individual power, the prompter of his labors, the guide of his tongue—the inspiring thought which like sunlight spread through his whole mental and spiritual being, and made him all aglow with that genial force which we have all felt radiating from him? Hear it, ye who are doting about questions and wordy strifes—ye who ask why this great, sick, distorted, miserable humanity of ours rejects your nostrums—ye who think that a broad church and æsthetic forms and dramatic machinery must be evoked from the grave, and who, because yourselves are dying the death of sceptical inanition, falsely infer that the whole Church of God is in the same condition of a suspended faith—hear it, ye thousand reformers who, unlike the Luthers, Calvins, Knoxes, Wesleys, Alexanders, have gone forth to battle with the serpent evil, but have disdained the old and simple armor of God—hear it ye who are for the removal of one social evil by the infliction of a greater—witness the bloody-minded benevolence which sanctions the murder of the white, that it may set free the black race: this man spent all his life, and all his great gifts, in preaching the Love of Christ. Christ, the Prophet—the Priest—the King—was to him the only hope of the individual man—the only cure of social evils—the only true centre of social harmonies. Not one among you all, better than he did, comprehended and felt the magnitude of the problems which lie tangled together in the bosom of the human worldly life waiting a solution. He watched and comprehended thoroughly the nature and force of every one of these boisterous tempests of thought which from time to time have swept over the field of truth, for a while obscuring it and threatening its demolition. From pantheistic impiety, which teaches men to worship, not the Being who harmonized nature's grand music, but the instrument he plays—

down to the delusions of besotted dealers with the dead, he saw that all were alike in this—a malignant and often frenzied desire to dethrone the Christ of History—the Christ who died and lay in the grave, the victim of a similar malignant passion—the Christ who has not ceased, and will not cease, to pity and forbear and plead with his bitterest enemies—until pity, forbearance and remonstrance are forced to give way to the reluctant but stern interference of Justice. Through all the forms of error which aim to release conscience from the restraints of a Divine Law, and a Divine Gospel whose grace they scorn with an especial scorn—he had gone with a critic's eye and a philosopher's candor—weighing their claims, measuring their half-truths, acknowledging the dialectic skill of some of their advocates, and wondering at the impudent frivolity of others—and with a full heart, he returned to bathe his wearied soul at the fountains of the grace of Christ Jesus our Lord—thankfully saying as he looked around upon this multitude of false Christs and false prophets: "To whom shall I go but to Thee; thou hast the words of eternal life."

You, who knew him from his preaching, all who knew his inner thoughts, will be able to discern the secret of his earnest, incessant, and skillful preaching of the cross. It lay in his own experience; in an experimental consciousness, a personal trial of the plans of redeeming grace. I need not say that he had thoroughly examined the historical evidence of the Bible, both in the writings of its friends and those of its foes; but he went deeper than this evidence can carry any one, into the vital nature and necessity of the things to be believed. Not from hearsay, but from actual personal trial, his heart acknowledged the power and fitnesses of the truths revealed. The Spirit of God made his eye to see them shining in their own inherent evidence. He knew himself a sinner, he knew himself a sufferer, and nothing in all philosophy, nothing within or without, could he find to correspond to this double personal necessity, but the expiation and consolation found in the work of Christ. To him, hell was no figment. He scorned, so far as his humility would allow him to scorn any thing, that shallow sentimentalism which, ignoring the claims of God's justice, is employing itself in pampering sin with eulogies upon God's mercy, as if the commonest of common-sense did not require of every man that he should find, if he can, some method of harmonizing these grand attributes; as if the groaning nature of which we form parts, and which writhes in the travail pains of sin before our very eyes every hour, does not assert the majestic jurisdiction which a just God holds over the transgressor man. He attempted, indeed, no solution of the reasons of God in relation to the origin of evil. He made no pretensions to be wise above what is written, but then—to use Paley's terse sentence—he did not suffer what he did not know to interfere with what he did know. He

knew sin—he knew Christ. He knew sorrow—he knew Christ. He believed in hell—he believed in Christ. He believed in heaven—he believed in Christ; and for his own sake, and for the sake of his fellow-sinners and fellow-sufferers, he allowed nothing to divorce these vast realities which God has joined together by the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Like chain-shot, when one of the grand truths of the Gospel grace enters an intelligent soul, it carries all the others with it. Revealed truth is a system of well-compacted parts. He knew this, and was eminently happy in building the arches of the bridge which conducted his hearers from one to another point in the system. From the fall from original righteousness, involving every man's helpless depravation of soul and body—onward through all the provisions which redeeming mercy has made for his restoration—where was there ever found a guide who had studied more profoundly every step of the process, or one more competent to expound the ways of God in words of truth and soberness. He was not one-sided, but complete in all that requires to be taught concerning the covenants of works and grace—concerning God the imperial Trinity and his sovereignty of wisdom, justice, power and love—concerning his gift, his unspeakable gift, the eternal Son incarnated to expiate sin by an awful sin-offering—concerning his free grace to the believing and repentant sinner through the in-working of the Holy Spirit, in renewing, in justifying and pardoning, in purifying, consoling and strengthening, and thus bringing him from the bondage of sin and death into the embraces of his Father in his Father's home. Through whatever region in the wide domain of thought he carried his hearers, he kept open an avenue by which he might easily bring them back to the central spot—the cross of Calvary. With what a master's hand did he draw sweet music to the glory of Christ from the many-stringed instrument—the works, the ways, the word of God! Who ever heard him preach or pray without perceiving the odor of the rose of Sharon? Simplicity and godly sincerity were the fruits of his personal faith, and truly did he bring them into his Master's service, with the finest appreciation of the dignity of his themes, and disdaining all the degrading arts of the fine orator. All his arts, as a great man once said of himself, were honest arts. The arts of the true artist, who, out of the treasure-house of words, brought things new and old, but never low and belittling, to win first the attention and then the faith, love, and obedience of his hearers. It was a Pauline manliness—a Pauline vigor of faith, which made him throw himself upon the themes, not the mere forms of Christian preaching—for no one whom it has been my lot to know, seemed more entirely penetrated with the thought, that this treasure “has been committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of men.”

Had I time, I might advert to his extraordinary skill in the art of exposition as distinguished from that of preaching. Alas! I have had but few opportunities of hearing him in this department; but it is the universal testimony of competent judges, that they never heard his equal in the gift of extracting and in the most natural and simple manner bringing his stores of learning and piety to elucidate the bond of connection between verse and verse in the word of God. His ready memory, his fluent elocution, his devout reverence for truth, his rejection of all pedantic conceits, made this, I am told, one of the most profitable of his talents. Happy the writer or preacher who possesses the gift—one of the most welcome that he can possess—the power of exhibiting and establishing an orderly connection among the otherwise vague and confused thoughts of inexperienced thinkers, without fatigue on their part.

I have time for a few words only upon another and a most important part of his ministerial character—his executive power. The least observed, the least known, the least appreciated, but most anxious and laborious task of the pastor is that of watching, following, caring for the manifold interests which are involved in the well-being of the congregation. Many of them small; many which ought to be cared for by others, but disturbing and carking in a high degree. Were it the pulpit alone that taxed his efforts, it would be little compared with being made the confidential repository of the griefs and errors of a multitude. He must painfully follow the wanderers from the fold with expostulation and rebuke, must try to calm the agitation of domestic sorrow, must go into many a door darkened by the shadows of evil, must witness many heart-breaking experiences of various sorts, some beyond relief; he must minister to the dying saint or sinner, and try to soothe the griefs of the bereaved. Shall I tell you, that often, when he who is now gone beyond the reach of this necessity, and I who am left behind to bear it awhile longer, have compared experiences we agreed in regarding these things as the heaviest part of the burden of our ministry? I will not dilate—but add only this one word; that these cares and labors, far more than any others, helped to wear out that delicate frame and terminate his life. It was work that must be done, and faithfully he did it.

Not without its reward was it; for it has, far more than his ability, won him a warm place in many a heart, into which he poured the balsam of God's promise with a gentle, a very gentle hand. But this is not the best of his recompense. Now he comprehends better than he did while here, that it was Christ to whom he ministered when he cheered the sorrow-stricken and smoothed the rugged road to death for so many. He has ere now heard the voice of him whom he loved saying: "Thou didst it unto me."

I fear, I know, my hearers, that I have fallen far below my

theme. It matters little, however. The will has been mine, if not the skill, to add a few leaves to the chaplet which adorns the memory of my friend. I will not obtrude upon you the further expression of my sense of personal loss. The wise, faithful, tender-hearted friend, the good and holy Christian man, displaces from my view at this moment, to a great extent, the great man. For after all, was not his goodness the greatest of his greatness? Not for his talents and attainments did Christ love him; but for his holy consecration. The servants of God, whose memories are embalmed in the sacred writings are rarely mentioned there because of their intellectual ability. Not that they were not highly endowed, but because they were known to God far more by the holiness which brought them like little children to the feet of Christ. And surely can I say of my dear friend, that far rather than stand in the highest place on the roll of earthly fame, he would have gloried in such a record as that of Barnabas: "He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people were added to the Lord."

Nothing now is left to us but these memories of him. His record is written upon our hearts; but a far more complete one is on high. The soldier, who, in the early dawn of youth enlisted for Christ and threw away the scabbard, has now laid down the sword. The scholar who had made so many attainments, knows now how small they were compared with what one glance into the spiritual glory has taught him. The son has embraced his venerated parents; the father has been welcomed by his little children, now grown to perfection in the heavenly glory. He who often resorted to the fountains of comfort which spring through the clefts of the rock made by earthly suffering; he who carried upon him while here the scars of many wounds given in the wars of life, now lives "where night, death, age, care, crime, and sorrow cease." I would we had all loved and prized him more while we had him. Had every one looked upon him while living as they look upon him now that he is dead and gone forever, many a word of truth lost in the silence, would not have fallen upon callous hearts.

O my brother! thou shalt always be to me one of the noble men who stand like promontories upon the sea of life; a help and guide to me in the work of our common Lord. We wait till we can come to thee, for thou wilt no more come to us. We are saved by this hope.

For sweet, while waning fast away
The stars of this dim world decay,
To hail, prophetic of the day,
The golden morning dawn, my soul!
To feel we only sleep to rise
In sunnier lands and fairer skies;
To bind again our broken ties
In ever-living love, my soul!

SERMON II.*

BY REV. JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.,

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THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

"WHITHER shall I flee from thy presence?"—PSALM 139: 7.

BY a form of words which has common use rather than classical authority on its side, we are said to realize certain truths. They were not desired before; we gave them a certain degree of credence; but they were not vividly present to our thoughts, lay with no weight upon our affections, exerted no motive power upon our will. The change which has now taken place, expressed in language true at once to philosophy and theology, is that we now believe them; and, as faith has degrees, that we believe them greatly. The sublime fundamental doctrine of the being of God, may be cited, as a capital illustration. We believe it, we always believed it, yet how inoperatively, until a certain epoch in our lives; and, since then, what immeasurable distance between the varying degrees of their acquiescence! So also of the particular attributes of God. Each of them is admitted as part of our creed; yet how far are most of us from yielding to the vast, over-powering idea, which, nevertheless, we never think of denying! In the present case, let us expand this thought with regard to a particular attribute of God, namely, his Omnipresence, and let us consider not so much the proofs by which that doctrine is established, as the modes by which it may be brought home with efficacy to our daily feelings and acts.

There is a mystery about the Divine Omnipresence, which we do not learn to solve, after years of meditation. As God is a simple spirit, without dimensions, parts, or susceptibility of division, he is equally, that is, fully, present at all times in all places. At any given moment he is not present partly here and partly in the utmost skirt of the furthest system which revolves about the dimmest telescopic star, as if like a galaxy of perfection he stretched a sublime magnificence through universal space, which admitted of

* Furnished by a brother of Dr. Alexander, at the request of the Editor of the NATIONAL PREACHER.

separation and partition; but he is present, with the totality of his glorious properties in every point of space. This results undeniably from the simple spirituality of the Great Supreme. All that God is in one place he is in all places. All there is of God is in every place. Indeed his presence has no dependence on space or matter. His attribute of essential presence were the same if universal matter were blotted out. Only by a figure can God be said to be in the universe; for the universe is comprehended by him. All the boundless glory of the Godhead is essentially present at every spot in his creation, however various may be the manifestations of this glory at different times and places.

Here we have a case which ought to instruct and sober those, who, in their shallow philosophy, demand a religion without mysteries. It would be a religion without God; for "who by searching can find out God?" Such Omnipresence as we have predicated of the Most High is absolutely incomprehensible. Yet we have to believe it, because the reverse would be absurd. Such is our position with regard to some of the most incontestable doctrines, not merely of revelation, but of natural religion. We bow, and wonder, and adore, and where we can not fathom, we still believe.

But it will be more pleasing as well as more useful to pass from these speculative considerations, to the important topic already pointed out. And it seems to me that we shall succeed in bringing this vital and precious doctrine more near to our apprehensions if we so revolve it on its axis as to present to us some of the several perfections of God as concerned in his Omnipresence. As the idea of God is the idea of his collective attributes, the omnipresence of God is the presence every where and at all times of all these attributes. To think of the all-present God as a vague entity, without the rich and impressive qualities which we justly assert of Divine Being, leaves us totally unaffected. It is only when we conceive of him as present with us and all creatures in the separate yet blending excellencies of the one glorious nature, that we begin to know and believe the true omnipresence. Above all is it necessary to religion, that we contemplate the Most High as present, not so much with worlds, or heavens, or angels, as with us; or rather to view ourselves as ever present with him, and wrapt in the divine atmosphere of his Omnipresence. And this we shall more easily comprehend and feel, if we regard ourselves as brought nigh to one lovely, awful, and adorable attribute after another. All our religion refers itself at length to God, and is modified according to our views of the Divine nature. It is not necessary to show this by a formal induction of all the particular perfections; but the application of this principle to a few, can not fail to be interesting and instructive.

I. *It is the OMNIPOTENT God who is omnipresent.* His name is

the Almighty. This is one of the earliest views which we are led to take of the Great First Cause. No sooner do we refer to him the frame of nature, with all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, than we pass swiftly forward to the belief of One whose power has no limitation. Our souls breathe the ascription: "None can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, what doest thou?" An all-pervading, adequate power, actually making itself felt in every system, world, realm of nature, species, individual, particle, and pure intelligence; a power, not the mere prime-mover, original physical impulse, or blind *anima mundi*; a living power, not the impersonal summation of forces and phenomena which the pantheist dreams; but conscious, intelligent, identical, one—that is, personal—the "living and true God," is a conception so high, so peculiar, so pure, so refreshing, so exalting, that every one who apprehends it must believe it, and every one who ponders it must crave to believe it more.

That he is thus mightily present in all other parts of his dominions, is less delightful to us, than for each of us to say, he is present here! this Lord, thus boundless in strength and originating all the causes of nature, is all this to me! I dwell amidst the plenitude of this omnipotence! Then may we cry, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Then can we readily cease to fear them that kill the body, when we stand in awe of one who is Almighty, and at our very side. Grace goes yet further, and the Gospel reveals to us this present power, which might be adverse, and so destructive, as ranging itself on our side; so that we may glory in all the might of God, as ready to sustain, deliver, and bless us. This will the rather appear to faith, when we consider that He who created the world, (and no higher manifestation of omnipotence is known to us) is the Eternal Son of God, the Word, who became flesh and died upon the cross for our salvation; by whom we have perpetual access to the Father; and in beholding whom, we behold the Father, as the present Omnipotent God.

II. *God is Omnipresent as the ALLWISE.* Language, and even conception fail when we approach the handling of such a topic. He who is omnipresent, and therefore this instant present with me, is the primeval light, the increate, original, causative, essential, real truth; giving truth to all that is true; giving intelligence to all that understands; in comparison with whose radiance, all the wisdom and knowledge of all men and all angels, in all time, are but as a dim rushlight to the aggregate of all the suns which his hand has sown broadcast through the track of illimitable space. How shall we climb to the altitude of such normal, substantial, all-comprehensive truth? How shall we voyage in every radiating path toward the surrounding sphere of luminous wisdom? Jehovah, the Ever True, is Eternal wisdom, and he is here! I

stand amidst the blaze and am unconsumed ; like the high priest beside the ark, in the mellowed light of the holy of holies. In no direction can I travel, whither this personal wisdom shall not accompany me. The Divine Word, as the second person of the adorable Trinity is named, from this very relation, is that wisdom who in the Old Testament declares : " My delights are with the sons of men." It is Emanuel, God with us, " who of God is made unto us wisdom." In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and we are complete in him ; for he is the " true light." Could we oftener recollect that he whom we avouch as present, is the impersonation of wisdom, and is such to us, we should be ready at certain moments to pause and to uncover our heads, even in the busy walks of life, that we might do homage to " God only wise." To effect such persuasions, the Spirit of Wisdom descends and dwells in the soul. Let us watch for his descent, and cheer our hearts with the belief of a Divine Omnipresence which is not far from every one of us.

III. *He who is Omnipresent is the HOLY ONE of Israel.* Infinite holiness surrounds us when we are in the presence of Jehovah. The serene, spotless effulgence of this divine attribute throws sin into hideous contrast ; indeed only thus can we be said to know ourselves as sinful ; just as blemishes in a robe are best seen when spread in meridian sunlight. All human, all angelic holiness, are as nothing to that abyss of purity belonging to God, and in which we are at all times floating and lost. The presence of a holy man deeply awes us ; we are restrained from sin by his very look, and feel ourselves drawn to more elevated thoughts by the sympathy of his superior pious sentiments. How then ought we to be affected by the full and perpetual presence of the All-holy God, from whom we can not escape, and in whom " we live, and move, and have our being." He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. In our profoundest and most silent solitude, a voice says to us, " Be ye holy, for I am holy." If the presence of human witnesses would deter us from impurity, how ought we to be arrested by the known presence of the Holy One ! Shall we pollute and desecrate the sanctuary where he dwells ? Pious men and exalted angels are smitten with this majesty. Thus, at the burning bush, the place where Moses stood was holy ground. Thus, at Bethel, Jacob awoke to say : " Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." Thus Isaiah shuddered when he saw in vision the Lord, sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and heard the veiled and burning seraphim responsively crying, " Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory ;" and hearing, cried : " Wo is me, for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." " These

things said Esaias, (says John 12: 41,) when he saw [Christ's] glory, and spake of him." Thus the same John, long after our Lord's ascension, beholding the Jesus on whose bosom he had reclined, now among the golden candlesticks, in countenance "as the sun shineth in his strength;" "and when I saw him," such is his own report, "I fell at his feet as dead." All these are instances of the awe produced by the nearness of a holy God. My brethren, he is not far from every one of us; and at every instant we are enveloped in the luminous cloud of an omnipresent holiness. There are numberless degrees in the faith which thus apprehends God as here in his ineffable sanctity; from the faint glimmering of light which you or I possess, up to the open vision of an Enoch, who walks with God. Here is a power to repress vain thoughts, to awaken conscience, and to warm devotion. He who thus believes in a holiness all about him, hovering over his common walks and penetrating with intimate search to his heart's intentions, will need no architectural pomp or cathedral ceremonies to lift his aspirations. He has that which hallows the humblest worship, rendered to him who will be worshiped "in spirit and in truth." This Divine attribute gives name to the third adorable Person of the Godhead, the Holy-Ghost. In this personality God dwells in the Church and in each believer, thus affording both motive and cause of eminent holiness. (1 Cor. 3: 16:) "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are!" Lovely yet awful thought! Ye, Christians, are the holy, living temple. Sin now has new colors of turpitude. Every sin harbored in your bosom is a pollution nestling in the shrine. To walk among all the duties of life as under this impression, and in such companionship with a holy God, is to be godly in the Scripture sense. This is that fear of the Lord which is perfectly compatible with love. It maintains nearness to the Divine throne, by means of him who is "holy, harmless, and undefiled," at once the Mediator and the Exemplar. Let the ever-present holiness of God overshadow us with a perpetual recognition of its reality, and earth will begin to be transformed to heaven, temptation will begin to lose its power, devils will fear and flee, and pure obedience will increase day by day.

IV. DIVINE JUSTICE is *Omnipresent*. If the former thought was full of awe, this, to sinners, is full of terror. It is another aspect of the same pillar of fire and cloud; it is the one indivisible majesty of the Godhead, breaking through a new cleft in the heavenly curtain; it is the essential sanctity of the Lord Almighty manifesting itself in antagonism to sin, vindicating the Divine glory, and turning its lightning-edge towards offenders in due and eternal "recompense of reward." Justice is that perfection, in the exercise

of which God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. It is infinite rectitude, demanding rectitude of the creature. It gives and guards the holy law. It is "benignity, administered with wisdom." It is the constant and immutable will of God to enforce the distinctions of good and evil, by consequent happiness and misery. The Justice of God is omnipresent. We need not ascend the height of heaven to find the Just God. He is here. He surrounds us. We are already and in every act arraigned before his tribunal. As the All-seeing Eye beholds, as the immaculate holiness loves or hates, so the infallible Justice adjudicates, upon every deed, word, and thought as it rises. We are always with our witness and our Judge. It is to Justice, on the omnipresent throne, that the soul, under promptings of conscience, says, "Thou God, seest me!" The secret sin you lately committed was in God's presence-chamber; it was judged on the spot. Offenses in open court need no other witnesses. The solemnity of the great day is only the sum of these prior judgments, and their august publication before the universe. You err, you err, my fellow-sinner, if you think of God's award as altogether adjourned to some coming hour. Now, now, and as you here sit and sin before God, you are in the forum of an infinite and operative Justice. And this truth, if adequately carried home to the conviction, would be annihilating, unless along with it were communicated the knowledge of the "Lord our righteousness." This only can be our shelter, when we shall be brought into the unveiled presence of Eternal Justice, at our dissolution.

V. *He who is Omnipresent is infinite in GOODNESS.* How this relieves the bright but stupendous scene! Wisdom might prescribe my ruin. Holiness might hold off from my sinfulness by an everlasting repulsion. Justice might demand my death. The nearness of all these might be only the omnipresence of destruction. But to be surrounded by Eternal Goodness—this reassures my heart! All the modes of Goodness are here included, benevolence, mercy, and grace. God is present with them all. Tokens of them all are visible on every side, as I walk through the palace of creation, and discern in every part of his handiwork the marks of the Maker's goodness. There, we learn to interpret better, by the word of truth in the Scriptures, where we see more of Divine benevolence in the gospel of Christ. But thus instructed, by nature and revelation, we walk in the never-ceasing rays of infinite Love. It is the view of this which gives all the encouragements of religion. All our hopes and comforts flow from persuasion of God's gracious disposition towards us, drawing out our reliance and our filial confidence. But our present point is, that God, thus good and gracious, this condescending and sympathizing Father, is not merely in the distant heavens, but here, beside us, and every moment

overhanging our path. Nay, as the word made flesh, Jesus Christ, he walks by our side, grasps our hand, and allows us to lean the weary head upon his bosom. Take in the full impression of the Infinite Goodness, as a circumambient Love, nearer and more penetrating than the surrounding air, or the universal light, embosoming us more closely than your body does your soul, and you will have found the secret of happiness. Such a condition needs only to be purged of certain earthly impurities to become celestial joy. Thus to "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living," is the privilege of the believer, increasing as he grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In times of solitary affliction these are God's comforts, which delight the soul. When every thing else is taken away, and all helpers are gone, faith exclaims, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!" During the earlier stages of our Christian experience, even though we trust in the Lord, this trust is mingled with much reliance on creatures; and if the creature-prop be taken away, unless faith be strong, we fall to the earth. We lean on some pastor or teacher, himself a broken reed compassed about with infirmities, and liable to be broken suddenly from beneath us; on a father, the guide of our youth, whose face has been to us second only to the face of God, who more than shared our sorrows, who lifted the burden of responsibility by the wisdom of his counsel, and towards whom our homage was little short of worship; on a husband, whose whole heart was ours, and who at the same time led our steps in the way of truth; on a wife, whose countenance was a perpetual admonition, and whose soul throbbed responsively to every spiritual care, who was our guardian angel. Blessed be God for such means of solace! But ah! we repose on them too much; ah! these supports are perishing from around us! I see some already thus bereft. In such an hour, and amidst such desolation of hopes, the soul finds itself alone with God; and oh! how precious the experience, when he is known and felt as omnipresent Love! Then can the breaking heart cry: "My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him!"

It has often been the lot of God's people to endure long sufferings at a distance from all sympathy and help. The exile has sighed in a strange land, where there was no human eye to pity. The decrepit victim of disease has languished for years upon the bed of pain, without family or near friends. The prisoner for conscience sake, has watched the changeful shadow come and go for years upon the wall which echoed no voice but his own. The haggard dying saint has breathed out his spirit by the wayside or on his wreck, all alone, yet God, the God of infinite goodness, was present, and present to him. And who can tell what joys have irradiated such solitudes, when the soul has found itself bathed in the light of God's favor? The God whom we adore, and who is every

moment with us, in all his power, wisdom, holiness, justice, and love, is infinite and eternal in all these perfections, and at the same time true and faithful in his covenant. "This God is our God, even unto death." The doctrine, I trust, has been applying itself to our hearts during all the discussion. Its practical lesson is one and simple. Walk in the power of the truth which you know. Live in the deep conviction that God, as thus apprehended, is every where present, and is with you. Hail the tokens of his holy, loving presence on every side; in heaven, in nature, in the word. How will this great light of faith extend your horizon, and lift your sky, and make your air ethereal! Not so should we bless you, if we could open your eyes to behold the world peopled with angelic natures, prompt to serve you. God is here; he filleth all things; he seeks your heart as his temple. Know this; believe it; recall it a thousand times; live in it; act on it. Give yourself up, again and again, every moment, in every act, to this glorious All-present One. Rejoice exceedingly that you can not escape his pervading essence, or resist the penetrating virtue of his immense diffusive love. In the toils of day, make oblation of all to him. Let your heart be as an altar ever dressed and displaying its tribute in that presence. And when slumber with its sweet illapse interrupts these thoughts, let the soul's whisper be, "When I awake I am still with thee!" Religion, in its highest moods, is nothing but a reference of every thing to a present God, with adoring love. Heaven is begun, when the human soul is thus again knit to God; separation from whom was its spiritual death. Meditation on the Divine Nature and Perfections, and contemplation of infinite beauty in his works, and providence, and word, are the means of rising into this blessed state. Think of God. Think of him repeatedly. Call back your roving mind to think of him. Think of him always. The sublime idea need not conflict with the tenor of duties. It shall rather be the deep accompaniment of life's melody, the basis of all the harmony. There is no such secret of tranquillity as abiding belief in God as present. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." (Job 22 : 21.) But, if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we may draw the curtain, and disclose an inner pavilion of approach. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." The general and essential presence of God is only the holy place; his revealed and manifested presence through the rent veil of Jesus, "that is, his flesh," is the holy of holies. The adorable Spirit makes the gracious presence of divinity to be felt. Then the favored soul has not only presence, but communion. The friend was with us before, but he was strange, yea, unapproachable; now his eye beams upon us with the look of love. To have our best human friend always with us, to hear his voice, to lean on his arm, to share his inmost thought,

this were a trifle too mean to name, compared with having the assured love of an ever-present God. If this is true, we need not die to reach our paradise. And it is not fancy, but revelation and promise. The world knows nothing of the secrets of this our sanctuary; how should it? The world knew not him who is its charm, and admits not him who is its Comforter. "I will pray the Father," said Jesus, "and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can not receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." This is the communion of which the apostle speaks thus: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

SERMON III.

BY REV. JOHN A. TODD,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, TARRYTOWN, NEW-YORK.

ON THE CHARACTER AND DEATH OF WASHINGTON IRVING.*

"FOR, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. The mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient. The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator."—ISAIAH 3: 1-3.

THE subject of this chapter is continued from the one which precedes it. The threatenings of God against Judah are here set forth in solemn and impressive array. The opening portion of the chapter is occupied with the general announcement that the peo-

* A discourse delivered in the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Tarrytown, New-York, on Sabbath morning, Dec. 11, 1859.

TARRYTOWN, Dec. 13, 1859.

REV. JOHN A. TODD: DEAR SIR: Having heard with great satisfaction the sermon delivered by you on Sunday last, on the death of the late Washington Irving, and desiring that it should be more extensively known, we would respectfully solicit a copy for publication. Very truly your friends,

Sanford Cobb, Jr., Abraham Storms, Wm. P. Lyon, John C. Mallory, George Howard, David S. Rowe, S. P. York, John Butler, Jr., Wm. H. Townsend, Wm. Hoge, Edward B. Cobb, Frank Vincent, Chas. L. Davis, Jacob Storm, Benson Ferris, Sr., H. Caruthers, M.D., Benson Ferris, Jr., Charles Starr, J. G. Dudley.

ple were about to be deprived of the supports upon which they principally depended, and among these are mentioned, as the chief and most important, "the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water," the food and the drink, which were essential to the preservation of life. Immediately following, we have a list of the public men—eminent and conspicuous for their official position, and for their natural endowments and genius—who were about to be removed from the nation, and among them we find the military, the civil, and the religious functionaries of the land.

As the next step in the progress of national decline, and as, indeed, the necessary consequence of what had just taken place, the affairs of the State are intrusted to the guidance of weak and unskillful hands. Insurrection against the established order of society, mutual violence and aggression, and wide-spread anarchy, are the fruits of a government whose power is not guided by the dictates of wisdom and justice. And, at length, no one being found willing to accept of public office—a singular condition of society, to which in this country we have never yet attained—the strong oppress the weak; the authority of law, the guaranty of personal rights, the security of life and property, are subverted and swept away, and the national existence is numbered among the things that were. In all this, the Prophet desired those whom he addressed to recognize the hand of God—that God who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." He did not allow their thoughts to rest upon the Chaldeans, as the primary cause of the events which he predicted, when in fact they were only the *instruments* employed by a superior and all-controlling power. But he led their contemplations away, upward and onward, along the narrow channel through which the divine energy rolled forward to its effect, until they found themselves in the presence of the Lord Jehovah himself, the everlasting God who fainteth not, neither is weary, and saw in Him the great and sovereign disposer of national as well as of individual destinies, who raises up one and casts down another according to his righteous will.

In the last verse of the preceding chapter, the Prophet had called upon the people "to cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils"—that is, to cease from reposing their trust in any human protection, and from regarding, with a confidence which shut out God from the government of his own universe, the high endowments of created mind. And in the text, he presents the argument by which he sought to convince their understandings, and to persuade their hearts into compliance with his exhortation. That argument lay in the fact that God was about to deprive them of the various means of support and protection upon which they so inconsiderately relied—the food upon which they subsisted, and the

men of illustrious station and preëminent intellect, who constituted, in their estimation, the bulwark and glory of their land.

For, behold, says he, the Lord as the sovereign disposer, even Jehovah of Hosts, the self-existent and eternal one, is about to take away from Jerusalem and Judah, not only from the capital, but from the whole kingdom, the stay and the staff, all kinds of support, and, first of all, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water, the supply of their physical and necessary wants. And next in the catalogue of supports and resources of which God was about to deprive them, the great men of the Commonwealth, thus—as the rendering may be literally given*—"Hero and warrior, judge and prophet, divine and elder, the chief of fifty, and the favorite, and the counselor, and the ingenious artificer, and the man who is skillful of speech"—that is, possessed of genius to mold and fashion language, and to clothe the creations of the mind in the attractive forms of persuasion, of melody, and of beauty.

Such is the meaning of the text. And thus did the Prophet teach the Jewish people of old, that there was a Power above all human power, upon which they were dependent, and in which they ought to put their trust—that man, whatever may be his prowess in battle, or his wisdom in counsel; whatever may be the insinuating and resistless enchantment of his genius, whether revealed in thoughts bodied forth, and transferred by the cunning artifice of letters to the written page, or breathed by the living voice in tones of eloquence and power upon the listening ear—is, after all, but a *creature*, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose heart is exposed and vulnerable to the shafts of death, and who, before the next moment has winged its way into eternity, may be torn from those who delight in his beautiful and multiplied creations, or who rely for safety upon his aid.

You have no doubt, my hearers, already apprehended the object of these remarks. Your thoughts have outstripped the words that were designed to awaken and direct them, and have gathered in solemn silence around that event which has cast a shadow of gloom upon this whole nation, and especially upon the community in which we live. Not that the idea of Death is unfamiliar to our minds; not that he does not often come into this, and into every community, wherever the sons and daughters of Adam have carried the frail clay of humanity; but because, in this instance, his stroke has fallen upon a distinguished victim, and he has removed from among us the presence of one toward whom our hearts went forth in unwonted admiration and regard. Every day, either here or elsewhere, and often in many places at one and the same moment, is Death exerting his solemn power upon the race of man.

* Chiefly, but not entirely, as given by Prof. ALEXANDER, on Isaiah, *in loco*.

In the humble cottage on some mountain slope, in some shaded valley or distant forest, or in the living wilderness of some great city, are the young and the old, the brave and the fair, passing away in unbroken procession to the dust of the sepulcher, and to the destinies of the life to come. But the great world without does not regard it. Like the leaves of Autumn that strew our pathway, they sink into the grave, and their death is crowded from recollection by the never-ending succession of new events. But when the tall and graceful trees of the forest—the monarchs whose heads towered above the general altitude—are brought down by some resistless blow, their fall is attended with a louder crash, and the earth itself trembles beneath the shock: so, when the men who walk upon the loftier heights of place and power, when those whose intellectual stature as they move along the paths of science, of history, of literature and of art, renders them preëminent above the general mass, are laid prostrate by the stroke of Death, the event impresses itself more vividly upon the minds of men, and calls out from its hidden springs in the heart a profounder sentiment of sorrow.

I know not what may be done or spoken elsewhere in regard to the departure out of this life of that illustrious and honored and beloved citizen, whom we, in this community, were so proud to call our friend and neighbor, but whatever it may be, I can not bring myself to believe that you, my hearers, are willing that he should pass away from among us never more to return, and that his dust should be laid down to mingle with that of parents and dearest kindred, by the shadow of that old Dutch Church, which is the mother of us all, without some recognition of his individuality—some words of tender feeling, of heart-felt sorrow, some expressions of love and reverence for his memory, some offerings of praise and thanksgiving to God for the excellent gifts, both of head and heart, with which he was pleased to endow him, and some attempt to gather up and to bring home, for our nobler and more spiritual uses, the solemn lessons of the dispensation which took him from us. His is a name to be revered and cherished. Its glory shines upon our country's annals. And now that he has gone from us, and from the land he loved so well, he has bequeathed to us, in his unblemished life, in his recorded words, and in his illustrious name, an inheritance worthy to be highly prized, to be sacredly guarded. A country's glory is the collected glory of the great men whom God has given her—their high achievements, their noble spirits, their memorable names. And it is right that they should have their monuments not merely in the mute and icy marble that marks the spot where their ashes rest, but in the warm, the living, throbbing hearts of all her sons.

—“Think not such names
Are common sounds: they have a music in them,
An odorous recollection; they are part
Of the old glorious past. Their country knows
And loves the lofty echo which gives back
The memory of the buried great,
And calls to valor and to victory,
To goodness and to freedom.”

When such a man dies, when his name is stricken from the roll of living men, and given in sacred charge to the historic muse, that she may “march with it down to latest times,” it is not meet that his honored dust should be put away out of sight in darkness and in silence, without some tribute to his character, to his life, and to his fame. For when we thus give our offerings of love and admiration to that which God made so fair, and yet so wonderful in capacity and power, we praise God in his works, we glorify his matchless and infinite skill, and we do honor to the dignity of that nature which is able so to appreciate and so to delight in the higher exhibitions of the wisdom and goodness of our Creator.

It is a solemn event when God comes by his Providence, and removes from the midst of a nation the mind which he has most highly endowed. Insensible must be that heart, and deaf to the voice of instruction must be that spirit, that does not receive with reverent humility, with docile submission, the impressive lessons which such an event is adapted and designed to teach.

It is a sad thing to utter. It is almost startling, to us who have been accustomed so long to look upon him as he has moved in quiet and unobtrusive dignity among us, but the hand of God has transferred the thought from the records of possibility to those of actual fact. WASHINGTON IRVING, the patriarch of American literature, the accomplished scholar, the admirable historian, the elegant writer, the wonderful magician, who evoked from the realms of thought the spirit of romance and beauty, and breathed it upon every hill and valley, upon every shady retreat, and every wandering brook that hastens on to join this noble river that pours its majestic volume into the sea—ay, and upon the very air that fans the summer verdure, or whistles through the branches of the wintry wood around us—the pure patriot, the diplomatist, watchful for his country's honor, and yet skillful in the arts of preserving peace; the kind and beloved neighbor, the faithful friend, and, what is better than all, because it constituted him the “highest style of man,” the modest and benevolent Christian, the sincere believer and disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ—WASHINGTON IRVING IS DEAD! Dead, did I say? No! He has just begun to live. His spirit has gone up to the enjoyment of a higher sphere, and its power upon the kindred spirit of his race has been consecrated by the solemn mystery of its departure. God has given to him the precious boon of a two-fold life—the life eternal

of the glorified in heaven, and the life of an undying memory in the hearts of men. And can we say of such an one that he is dead? True, he has gone from us, and on earth we shall see his face no more.

"But strew his ashes to the wind,
Whose sword or voice has served mankind—
And is he dead whose glorious mind
Lifts thine on high?
To live in hearts we leave behind
Is not to die."

We have lost his welcome presence, and it is for that we mourn. But his grave is with us, and here it will remain for generations to come, the shrine of unnumbered pilgrim feet. From the lofty eminence upon which he stood, conspicuous to the eyes of the world, from his position of intellectual greatness and spotless dignity, he has passed away. The sepulcher has claimed all of him that was mortal for its own. His eye is quenched; his arm is palsied; the tongue that was ever eloquent with the words of kindness is hushed to the ears of living men forever; the pen that distilled upon the written page the subtle creations of his brain, the ideal forms all fresh and fair from the realms of intellectual beauty, in which his spirit loved to linger, lies where he left it, dead and silent, like the clay from which the living soul has departed. And on this Sabbath morning, while we are gathered in the house of God, his honored remains are sleeping by the side of her whom he called by the holy name of "Mother," who loved him while living, and whose memory he loved when dying, in the grave which he had appointed for his last repose. There, there may they sleep in peace, until these heavens be no more, and in the last day be raised again to the glorious resurrection of the just!

It is not my purpose, nor is this the proper time, to trace the career or to pronounce the eulogy of the illustrious dead. Born in the city of New-York, at No. 131 William street, about midway between John and Fulton streets, and only a few steps from the old North Dutch Church, on the 3d of April, 1783, and dying in his own quiet home on the banks of the Hudson, on the 28th of November, 1859, he attained to the ripe old age of seventy-six years, seven months, and twenty-five days. And then he received the fulfillment of the promise: "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season."

The record of his life, from the home of his childhood, upward and onward, along the path of toil and triumph which he trod, with quiet courage and ascending step, until he reached the last and loftiest height of his earthly being, from which he went still forward and upward, "with his old stride from glory to glory,"

has been carried on the wings of fame to the farthest hamlet of our country, and to the remotest corners of the civilized world.

It is enough to say that, beginning his literary career at the age of nineteen, and sending forth the first of his principal works at the age of twenty-six, his progress to the end was but the continual repetition of success. Of him it may be said, what was said of another, that

"He kept Victory on the run,
Till Fame was out of breath."

The last work, and perhaps the greatest, that he ever wrote, the *Life of Washington*, he completed but a few months before his death. In that his labors came to a close—the star of his genius culminated to its zenith; and while the vestal fire of patriotism shall burn in the national heart, and while the English language—the grandest of living tongues—shall express the thoughts of living men, that work shall perpetuate the names of George Washington and Washington Irving, canonized in the fellowship of glory—the Father of his Country and the Father of his Country's Literature. The triumphs of his splendid morning were surpassed by those which he achieved beneath the mellow radiance of his setting sun; and thus, by the labors of his declining years, he appropriated to himself a share in the sentiments which, it has been affirmed, could be applied to none but Milton—that "he was the only man who ever eclipsed his own fame by a higher and brighter noon; who, after winning an immortality for his youth, gave it back to oblivion by the achievements of his age."

But his character wore another aspect; he was something more than the man of genius. Honored as he was, the world over, he was yet loved as well, and as much, as he was honored. No one could mingle in his society, though the opportunity were but brief, without feeling the magnetic influence of his nature. In his countenance, as well as in the placid flow of his language, and in the sentiments which he habitually entertained, the one feature which distinguished his character as a man, and stood out in pleasant and winning prominence, expressed itself to all who knew him in the single word—peace. For the struggles of intellectual warfare, the sharp excitement of opposing convictions, it is almost needless to say that he had no taste. In the atmosphere of mutual love, in the fragrance of gentle sympathies, he found his congenial element, and there he was ever at home. On more than one occasion, when the debated questions of ecclesiastical order, and subjects of a kindred nature, have engaged the conversation of friends in his hearing, he has been known to interpose with the remark: Let us live in love. We are all striving for the same object, and going to the same place of rest; and why should there be contentions by

the way? His mild expostulation at once silenced the discord of controversy, and brought back the reign of peace.

Attached he undoubtedly was to the polity and forms of worship of the particular denomination of Christians to which he belonged, but his heart was too large, his sympathies too noble, not to recognize and appreciate, with profound respect, the excellence and labors of other denominations that maintained the vital principles of Christianity. No one could fairly apply to him the lines which Goldsmith so unfairly applied to Burke :

"Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind."

He had a broad and catholic spirit, which he manifested not only in words, but also in deeds. The pecuniary means which he subscribed and paid to promote the general interests and efficiency of the Reformed Dutch Church in this village, together with other contributions to religious and benevolent purposes, indicate very clearly the liberal sentiments which occupied his mind and heart—sentiments which are the never-failing result of true piety in union with intellectual greatness. One of the last acts of his life—occurring in November, the very month in which he died—was to present to the library of the Western Theological Seminary of the Old-School Presbyterian Church, at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, through the hands of a venerable and valued friend residing in Pittsburgh, a beautiful copy of his *Life of Washington*. I had myself the pleasure of examining the volumes a few days before they were sent to their destination, and was struck, on reading the brief lines of presentation which he had written on a blank leaf of the first volume, by the traces of that graceful modesty which ever distinguished him, and by the simple affection which he cherished for his friend. We can not wonder, when we contemplate his life, that his death awakened in so many hearts the sad sense of personal affliction, or that so many unfeigned mourners were found in the slow procession which followed his remains to the tomb.

In quiet simplicity—in all the gentleness of sunny and genial childhood—with a heart overflowing with kindness and good will toward all men, and filled with submissive and grateful humility before God—with a spirit mild and amiable by nature, and rendered still more lovely by the ennobling influence of the religion of Jesus Christ, which he firmly believed and consistently professed—he passed his days among us until they closed with the closing year, amid peaceful scenes, and under gentle skies, which were in singular and beautiful harmony with the spirit that ruled his life. In him, if ever, did the blended lineaments of greatness and humility illustrate the fair ideal upon whose living realization the martyr-student of Cambridge so earnestly longed to look!

—"Oh! I would walk
A weary journey to the furthest verge
Of the big world, to kiss that good man's hand,
Who in the blaze of wisdom and of art,
Preserves a lowly mind; and to his God,
Feeling the sense of his own littleness,
Is as a child in meek simplicity!"

Conscious that the powers of his physical frame were giving way—that "the silver cord was about to be loosed," and "the pitcher to be broken at the fountain"—he anticipated his departure at no distant day. But a short time before his death, while assisting to convey to the tomb the remains of an aged and venerable friend, he was heard to remark that the service which he was then performing for another he would soon need for himself.

On another occasion, during the month of November, as he was taking leave of one who has often worshiped with us in this sanctuary—a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church, no less revered for his character than for his labors and his years, to whom he was greatly attached, and who was about to return to his Western home, from which he had come to spend the summer on the banks of the Hudson—he referred with touching emotions to their declining age, and to the probability that this would be their final parting. But, he immediately added, although they might never meet again on earth, there was a better land, and they would temper their present sorrow with the hope of a reunion in the life to come. God grant that when his surviving friend shall follow him thither, that hope may have a full and glorious realization! But perhaps the most solemn and tender expression of his anticipations in regard to death was that which was among the last, if it was not, indeed, the very last, that he was known to utter. Only five days before he closed his eyes forever upon the light of earth, he stood by his mother's grave—that mother whose memory was ever dear—and pointing to the spot by the side of it which he had selected for his own, he said calmly to the friend at his side: "I shall soon be there."

Dear old man! he has reached the goal of his earthly journey. His prophecy is fulfilled. Crowned with the wreath of immortal fame, loaded with the benedictions of loving hearts, full of years, full of peace, he has gone to his rest. There his head shall recline upon its lowly pillow, and his Redeemer shall guard his sacred dust.

It is delightful to think that the same benignant Providence which smiled upon his life gave to the time of his death and burial the placid beauty of unclouded skies, the brightness of warm and golden sunshine, the glory of autumnal hills bathed in its effulgence, and rendered pure and sweet by the gentle winds that blow upon them from the majestic river that rolls beneath. It is more

delightful to think of the love and veneration that swelled the hearts of the congregated thousands that came from near and far to pay their homage to his genius and his worth. But it is most delightful of all to think that the patriarch's work was done, and that he was waiting for the call of that blessed Master whose love transforms the gates of death into the gates of glory to the soul. Yes, yes. It is true, my friends, we have nothing to regret, nothing to mourn, but our own loss, our own bereavement.

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

And now, beloved hearers, what is the lesson which we are to learn from this solemn dispensation? Is not God teaching us individually and as a nation that every earthly stay and staff is but frail and uncertain at best? Does he not remind us, when the great men of our country come down from their high places to sleep in the dust, that all that pertains to time is imperfect, transient, perishing? One by one the great lights of a nation are extinguished by death. The men of brave hearts and giant intellects—warriors, statesmen, historians, poets, philosophers, divines—they pass away, and who shall take their vacant places? Who shall fight the battles, stand at the helm of government, record the march of history, sing the song of joy, chant the dirge of sorrow, explore the mysteries of science, defend the cause of truth and righteousness, and plead with men in the accents of persuasion, and with God in the accents of prayer? Ah! my hearers, we know full well that none but God can give the arms of strength, and the hearts of courage, and the intellects of power. *God and God only, is great.* Let us, therefore, take refuge in him. With love for his character, with trust in his promises, with confidence in his goodness, with obedience to his will, let us go to him, and pray that our fellow-men, that our whole country may go with us, and then "the place of her defense shall be the munitions of rocks," and "upon her assemblies God will create a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." "In his name shall they rejoice, and in his righteousness shall they be exalted. He shall be the glory of our strength. For the Lord himself shall be our defense, and the Holy One of Israel shall be our King."

Let me entreat you also, beloved friends, to be admonished by the Providence of God, that, to every one here assembled, life is short and death is certain. Rank, wealth, learning, genius—they are all nothing to the stern regard of Death. With promiscuous blow, and without respect of persons, the high and the low, the small and the great, are laid prostrate together at his feet. The

experience of the past, the events of every departing day, the lessons of that startling Providence whose echoes are yet lingering in our ears—all combine to impress the great conviction upon our hearts: "All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the field. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." True, indeed, it is, that death, as in the example before us, is the natural and fitting termination of a life protracted beyond threescore years and ten. True, also, it undoubtedly is, that the sentiment expressed by the ill-starred son of genius, whose dust lies sleeping on the banks of the pastoral Nith—

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!"

has met with many a sad response from the children of poverty and sorrow. Death does sometimes come in the vesture of friendship and gladness, and smile upon the suffering, the heart-broken, and the weary. He does sometimes come to the child of God, waiting and anxious for the final hour when he may depart and be with Christ, which is far better, with a message like that which broke from an angel's lips upon the startled air of Bethlehem: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy!" But, believe me, oftener far does he come to men in stern and appalling aspect. And thus, my hearers, unless he be disarmed of his terrors by your individual and personal reliance upon the blood of Christ for safety, will death inevitably come to you. The accumulations of laborious years, the gratification of the body and the mind by the two-fold ministry of nature and of art, the bands of love, the tender associations, the maturity of age, the strength of manhood, the buoyancy of youth—what are they all to Death? He tears men away from wealth and power, from pomp and pleasure. When the bud of enterprise is unfolding itself into the flower of success; when hope stands with sparkling eye to greet the approaching fulfillment; when victory, like an eagle, comes sailing down the heavens to perch upon the standard that has been upborne with heroic courage through a long and weary struggle; when the cup of joy is mantling to the brim, and the heart is bounding with exultation—then, then, suddenly, there is a flash like the bolt from heaven, and the noon-tide brightness is changed into the midnight gloom. The man is dead. His heart is still. His eye is dark. His hands are folded across his icy breast. They carry him out, and they lay him down in the grave. Oh! how true are those words which burst from the agonized heart of Edmund Burke, when he contemplated the death of his only son: "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!"

My dear friends, there is no escape for us. We must all die. But in the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ there is an antidote against the power of death. With him is the fountain of life, and his people shall drink from it forever. The body may sink, but the spirit shall rise. The clay may crumble, but the soul shall mount in glory. "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Christ; "he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." The garland of immortality that withered in Eden, shall bloom again for the righteous in the Paradise of God.

To-day, then, with the admonition of Providence sounding in your ears, with the vision of a new-made grave before you, let me come to you in the name of Christ, with the offer of everlasting life. He gives freely—he gives abundantly. Oh! love him, trust him, follow him. Then, when the spirit is about to depart from the falling tabernacle of the body, it may pour itself into that triumphant shout of God's redeemed: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

One of the latest acts of this distinguished author was to present a copy of his *Life of Washington*, elegantly bound, in five volumes, to the Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny. It bears the following superscription, in the author's clear hand:

"Presented to the Western Theological Seminary, through the hands of my most valued and venerated friend, Rev. Francis Herron, D.D.

"WASHINGTON IRVING,
"Sunnyside."

November, 1859.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. ALEXANDER.

IN placing a truthful portrait of the late much lamented Rev. James W. Alexander, D.D., as an embellishment to the present number of the NATIONAL PREACHER, we hope to gratify the feelings of many of his admiring and loving friends, as well as that of our own personal regard. We knew him well. We would honor his character and his memory as a faithful and devoted minister of the Gospel, who was well and widely known, and whose praise is in all the churches. Others, his personal friends and compeers in the pastorate, who knew him more intimately, have already embalmed his memory in touching and eloquent language.

We quote from the *Presbyterian* of Philadelphia the following:

"James Waddel Alexander, the eldest son of Dr. Archibald Alexander, was born in Louisa county, Va., March 13th, 1804. On his mother's side he was the grandson of James Waddel, William Wirt's celebrated 'Blind Preacher.' He graduated at Princeton in 1820, and was appointed tutor in that Institution in 1824. He resigned that post the next year, and settled as pastor in Charlotte county, Va. Here he remained two years, and in 1828 accepted a call to the First Presbyterian Church, Trenton, N. J. In 1832 he resigned this charge, and became the editor of the *Presbyterian*, whence, in 1833, he was called to the Professorship of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the College at Princeton. Here he remained till 1844, when he was elected pastor of the Duane-Street Presbyterian Church, New-York. In 1849, he was appointed Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Princeton Theological Seminary, where he remained till 1851, when he was led to return to his former charge in New-York, then erecting for themselves their present place of worship in a more inviting section of the city, and in a more encouraging field of labor. His ministrations here were eminently blessed. When the revival commenced in 1858, he entered heartily into it, and through the press, as well as by his pulpit and pastoral labors, endeavored to promote it. His series of revival tracts, published without his name, were extensively circulated; and we notice by some of our last foreign papers, that they have found their way to Ireland, and are helping on the good work there. By reference to the Minutes of the General Assembly, we observe that during the last ecclesiastical year he received to his church, on profession of faith, *one hundred and twenty-five members*—the largest number, we believe, added to any church within our bounds.

"After a winter of exhausting labor, Dr. Alexander found his health seriously impaired, and his whole nervous system greatly prostrated. In the early part of June last, at the urgent request of his devoted people, he consented to lay aside his work for a few months, in the hope of a speedy restoration. To this end he visited the mountains of Virginia, where, on former occasions, he had found relief from the salubrious air and medicinal waters. His last letters from this region were encouraging. But on Friday, July 29th, a telegram brought the startling news, that his condition was critical. The forebodings thus awakened were confirmed on Sunday by another dispatch, saying that he was 'sinking rapidly.' Earnest prayer went up from many hearts and lips for his recovery, that day, both in the sanctuary and in the closet. But alas! the time for prayer on this behalf was already past. At five o'clock on that Sabbath morning he fell asleep in Jesus. Thus the pulpit has lost another of its most illustrious ornaments. A good and a great man has fallen. Another name is added to the list of the illustrious dead."